

Amendments to the Claims

Please cancel Claims 1-25 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please add new Claims 26-40.

26. (New) An image forming method comprising the steps of:
making a surface of an intermediate transfer body hydrophilic by processing
through application of energy;
applying a liquid on the intermediate transfer body that has become hydrophilic, the
liquid reducing the fluidity of ink on the intermediate transfer body;
forming an image on the intermediate transfer body having the liquid applied
thereto, by ejecting ink from ink jet printing means; and
transferring the image formed on the intermediate transfer body onto a recording
medium.

27. (New) An image forming method according to claim 26, wherein the surface
of the intermediate transfer body contains at least one of a fluorine compound and a
silicone compound.

28. (New) An image forming method according to claim 26, wherein the surface
of the intermediate transfer body is formed of an elastic material with a hardness of
between 10 and 100 degrees.

29. (New) An image forming method according to claim 26, wherein the processing for making the surface hydrophilic by processing through the application of energy comprises plasma processing performed at an atmospheric pressure or at a pressure lower than the atmospheric pressure.

30. (New) An image forming method according to claim 26, wherein the processing for making the surface hydrophilic by processing through the application of energy is additionally performed.

31. (New) An image forming method according to claim 26, wherein the liquid contains a component for coagulating a colorant of ink.

32. (New) An image forming method according to claim 31, wherein the component comprises metal ions.

33. (New) An image forming method according to claim 31, further comprising a step of applying a second liquid for improving a wettability of the surface of the intermediate transfer body prior to applying the liquid.

34. (New) An image forming method according to claim 26, further comprising a step of promoting a removal of water from the ink on the intermediate transfer body prior to transferring the image onto the recording medium.

35. (New) An image forming method according to claim 26, further comprising a step of cleaning the surface of the intermediate transfer body.

36. (New) An image forming method comprising the steps of:
performing plasma processing on a surface of an intermediate transfer body, the surface being a non-ink absorbing surface, to make the surface hydrophilic;
applying a reactant liquid for reacting with ink on the intermediate transfer body that has become hydrophilic by the plasma processing;
forming an image on the intermediate transfer body having the liquid applied thereto, by ejecting ink; and
transferring the image formed on the intermediate transfer body onto a recording medium.

37. (New) An image forming method comprising the steps of:
performing plasma processing on a surface of an intermediate transfer body, the surface containing at least any one of fluororubber and silicone rubber, to make the surface of the intermediate transfer body hydrophilic;
applying a liquid for coagulating a colorant of ink on the intermediate transfer body that has become hydrophilic by the plasma processing;
forming an image on the intermediate transfer body having the liquid applied thereto, by ejecting ink from ink jet printing means; and
transferring the image formed on the intermediate transfer body onto a recording medium.

38. (New) An image forming method comprising the steps of:

applying a liquid on an intermediate transfer body that has become hydrophilic by processing through application of energy, the liquid reducing the fluidity of ink on the intermediate transfer body;

forming an image on the intermediate transfer body having the liquid applied thereto, by ejecting ink from ink jet printing means; and

transferring the image formed on the intermediate transfer body onto a recording medium.

39. (New) An image forming method comprising the steps of:

applying a reactant liquid for reacting with ink on an intermediate transfer body having a non-ink absorbing surface that has become hydrophilic by plasma processing;

forming an image on the intermediate transfer body having the liquid applied thereto, by ejecting ink from ink jet printing means; and

transferring the image formed on the intermediate transfer body onto a recording medium.

40. (New) An image forming method according to Claim 39, wherein the surface contains at least any one of fluororubber and silicone rubber, and the liquid reduces the fluidity of ink on the intermediate transfer body.